

# THE FORT HOOD CUSTOMER SERVICE NEWSLETTER

November 14, 2011



## Importance of Customer Feedback -

Customer feedback is vital to making a business work. Your customers are the heart of your operation; without them, it would be impossible to have any of the success that you do. Customer feedback can be an excellent way to keep your business going in a positive direction.

Get Honest Opinions: Customer feedback is a vital way to get honest opinions on your services or products from people who are familiar with them. These opinions can make it easier to get into the minds of the most important critics.

Improve Relations: When customers feel that a business truly cares about them and what they think, they may be more likely to be loyal customers. When a business makes changes according to feedback, it shows that they truly listen and respect those opinions.

Inexpensive Business Advice: Some businesses pay thousands of dollars for someone to come in

and tell them what improvements need to be made to the business to get more customers. Customer feedback is essentially inexpensive business advice directly from the source.

More Customers: When a business is willing to receive feedback and listen to it, word spreads and more customers may be willing to give you a shot based on your commitment to excellent customer service.

Positive Changes: A business does not like to brag about the negative aspects of their operation; they want to have mostly positive things to say. Customer feedback can mean positive changes according to their comments, which could mean a better reputation and more money for the business.

## Does your customer talk back to you?

If you don't know what your customer thinks about you, your business, your product and your services, then you might as well close shop!

A customer is the lifeblood of every business and you must always strive to be in tune with what your customer thinks and how they feel. Don't leave your customers unattended and in the dark. Invite feedback. Add a feedback form to your website

## FORT HOOD IS STILL "THE GREAT PLACE"

**"THE FUTURE OF THE ARMY BEGINS AT FORT HOOD"**

or a simple "mailto:" link that looks something like this:

"Questions? Comments? Send email to [info@m...](mailto:info@m...)"

People love to give their opinion especially if they decide that your product or services, which they have purchased, needs improvement. How will you know this if you don't provide a means to communicate with your customers?

A customer's independent review of your products and services carries far more weight than your own ravings about how great your products and services are. Sure you know that your products and services are great or you wouldn't be providing them, but you will be more convincing if you can get honest endorsements from people who use them.

People should endorse your business not because they think it looks good but because they know it is good. If they have problems with your products, they can be a great source of objective advice to you on how to make improvements and if you allow a customer to critique your product or services, they will be happy and proud to endorse it.

Satisfied customers are another great source of endorsement. Approach your customers for testimonials about your product or services. If you don't yet have satisfied customers, ask someone to use your product for free or

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offer your services for free, then ask for their comments. If they are satisfied with using your product or services, ask permission to use their comments to further promote your organization.

If you have a website that promotes your organization, make your site interactive for your customers. Give them a reason to return to your site and especially to tell others about your unique product and/or services.

Here are some suggestions:

- \* Provide a help number - give people a number to call if they have questions about the products or services they received.
- \* Return an acknowledgement that you have received their feedback or email.
- \* Promote the ICE Program as a primary means to receive their feedback.
- \* Create a "tell your friends about this site" form that enables visitors and customers to email information about your site, directly from your site to others telling them about how great your site is.
- \* Create a guest book and invite customers and visitors to sign it so you can know who visited your site and you will be also able to send follow up emails to them.
- \* Be sure your site has contact information or contact link - too many sites forget to include such important information.

\* Be sure to have an "About Us" link that includes information about your business as well as a mission statement.

If you have already done all that, you are on the right track but there are many more things that can be done to create awareness and a liaison between you and your customers. You have to be very creative and design new and unique ways that you can continue to interact with your customers.

One of the proven methods that have worked consistently for successful organizations is to write articles and put a link on your site that lists all the articles that you write. This is a very good source that will provide "inside tips and goodies" to your customers that they wouldn't be able to get anywhere else and will also bring new customers to your site.

Another way is to provide a "Tips Corner" on your website or a discussion board that your customers can find helpful and valuable information. They will develop trust and respect for you and this will bring you success in no time.

Every business person wants to attract a wide range of customers and as an online business owner, you have a greater advantage when it comes to how far your business reaches but it all depends on how the effect you have on your customers. The web can be a lonely place. Find ways to let your customers talk back to you.



## **The importance of customer feedback can be best found by listening.**

It is amazing how many companies contact subject matter experts in the customer service field and want some quick "fix" to their customer service issues or want to implement a change in the way they service their customers. Too often, asked what their customers think about the products and services they provide, their answer is "We know what our customers want." This is typical of the "self-licking ice cream cone" syndrome. In other words, the company tells the customer what they want instead of asking the customer what they want.

Regardless of the type of business you are in, getting input from your customers is critical to your success. I don't care how long or how successful you as an individual may be, you will never cease to better your business by learning from your customers. This is one of the first steps to successful improvement of customer service.

As a result of involvement with numerous survey experiences with clients, there have been some observations of what works  
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and what doesn't and offer the following conclusions:

1. You will learn from customer surveys. Nothing can replace customers telling you how they like to be treated, what you are doing right, and what could be done better. It is a wonderful way to constantly improve your service. You'll learn everything from how they perceive your attitudes of service to how they feel you keep them informed when they have problems. But you won't learn anything at all if you don't ask.

2. Surveys are a wonderful marketing tool. Your customers are going to derive that you are striving to make things better for them. They'll sense that you are pursuing a quest for improvement. Remember, your customers don't expect perfection; they rather want a relentless pursuit of quality. This shows that you are after just that. Additionally, surveys are an additional way to get in front of your customers without attempting to sell them anything.

3. Respond to their input by making changes. If you really want to "wow" your customers, let them know that you heard them and that you are implementing what they want. If it can be done, do it! If it can't, let them know that you heard them and what you CAN do. This is a challenge for many companies, especially smaller ones who might not be able to implement the changes

their customers request. It is much better to ask, though, so that you can know what your customers would prefer you provide rather than losing them to another company who is giving what your company should be giving.

4. You are not going to like some of what you hear. This is the reason so many companies don't want to do surveys; they are afraid of what their customers are going to say. Expect that, but look at negative comments as being "gifts" that will help you become better.

5. Be brief with your surveys. Your customers will respect the fact that you appreciate their schedule by asking brief, easy to respond to questions. The biggest complaint customers have with surveys is that they are too long.

6. Repeat the survey regularly, but not too often. An annual or semi-annual survey can serve as a pretty effective report card for your organization. Put great emphasis on what their customers are thinking as well as how the company is improving. Online, anonymous surveys tend to get the best responses.

There is a clear shift taking place in business today towards the people side of customer service. The leading companies are discovering the power of listening, both to customers and employees. These surveys are a good way to say "what you think is important to us."

4<sup>th</sup> Quarter/FY2011 ICE Statistical Analysis Report:

1. Data used to compile this report was extracted from the DoD online ICE database and reflects satisfaction ratings for Garrison and non-Garrison agencies. The report includes an overall analysis of 6,463 customer comments submitted.

2. The Garrison has maintained the effectiveness of the ICE Program; however, there was a 4% decrease in the number of comments submitted from 3QFY11 to 4QFY11. This decrease in itself is not significant in the overall analysis. There are many factors that could have had an impact on the reduction of feedback received.

## a. **Positive Findings:**

1) The ICE Program continues to grow in the use of the program and participation from external agencies, specifically CRDAMC. CRDAMC has almost doubled the amount of feedback received over the past two quarters, which was enhanced by discontinuing participation in the "Strive for Five" feedback program.

2) Of the total Garrison feedback received, DPTMS contributed 34%. Additionally, DHR, DOL, Family and MWR and DPW represented 54% of the total Garrison feedback. Family and MWR experienced a 12% increase in total comments received this quarter, the biggest

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jump in total feedback of all Garrison service providers.

3) Of the "Big Five" directorates, three are in the green (85% - 100%) for a satisfaction rating; Family and MWR and DPW are in the Amber. Family and MWR are at 82% (up 1% from last quarter) and have increased their satisfaction rating as well as number of comments received.

4) 86% of the total comments submitted for Fort Hood overall this quarter were positive in nature. Although this percentage is down 3% from last quarter, Fort Hood is still in the Green. The Garrison received an 89% satisfaction rating. These ratings signify that we are still maintaining a relatively high satisfaction rating and that our customers are primarily happy with the products and services we provide.

## b. Negative Findings:

1) The ICE Program is designed to be an anonymous feedback process, which makes it difficult to address and resolve issues if the customer does not provide contact information. Resolution becomes even more complicated when all the information related to the situation is not stated in the ICE Comment. As with last quarter's analysis, this trend has remained consistent throughout the current quarter.

2) ICE is designed to be a feedback program for customer

service related issues only. We continue to receive comments for various non-customer service related issues. Although these issues are important, they are not addressed through the ICE program, but are forwarded to the appropriate directorate/agency leadership for situational awareness.

3) A similar trend from last quarter shows that some service providers receive very little feedback. It's possible that these service providers do not promote the ICE Program and are not effective at soliciting feedback. Organizations that receive consistent feedback throughout the quarter indicate that they are effective at promoting the use of the ICE Program and soliciting customer service feedback.

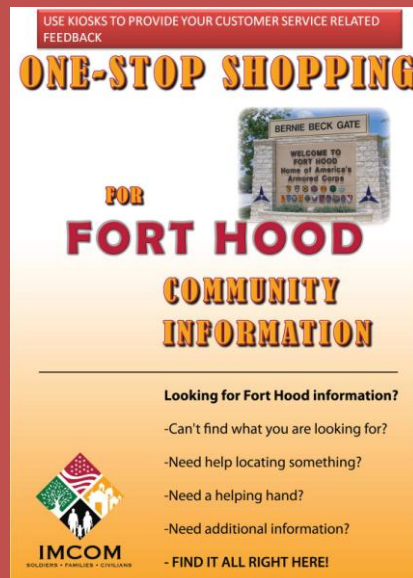
4) As with the last quarter, a substantial amount of negative feedback was received by the housing division. The housing division is extremely effective at both promoting the ICE Program and receiving valuable feedback. Although they receive a substantial amount of negative feedback related to maintenance issues, they receive an equal amount of positive feedback related to the great customer service provided by the technicians who service the homes.

3. The following methods can be used to maintain or improve current customer satisfaction levels:

a. Continue to promote the ICE Program using the Sentinel, monthly newsletters, periodic customer service training (Family and MWR and the Civilian Leadership Development Program) and commander updates with senior leaders.

b. Promote a Customer Service Incentivization Program designed to educate customer service representatives on the importance of customer service related feedback.

4. Conclusion: Overall, Fort Hood continues to provide excellent customer service to our Soldiers and their Family members; however, with more emphasis on the promotion and use of the ICE Program, we can paint a clearer picture and gain a better understanding of customer expectations in order to provide priority services during this time of limited funding.





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## ICE Business Cards

ICE Business cards are an excellent way to promote the ICE Program. They are easy to create and easy to hand out to your customers. Below is an example of the one the Fort Hood Customer Service Office gives out. If you need ICE Business cards, simply call Dale Cowan, Fort Hood Customer Service Officer, at 254-288-6260. They can be picked up in the III Corps HQs Building on the third floor in W317.

If you wish to create your own ICE Business cards, with all information pertinent to your organization, send me an email at [dale.cowan@us.army.mil](mailto:dale.cowan@us.army.mil) and I will send you the word template.

Let your customers know you care by soliciting their feedback today!!

# ICE

**Interactive  
Customer  
Evaluation**

Customer Service Office,  
Plans, Analysis, & Integration  
Office, Bldg 1001, RM W316,  
Tank Destroyer,  
Fort Hood, Texas 76544  
Phone: (254) 288-6260  
We want to hear from you!  
Send us a comment today!

<http://ice.disa.mil>  
Click  
"Army Conus"  
Click  
"Fort Hood"



**Cool Yourself Down and Put IT on ICE TODAY!**



If you have an issue, don't let it cause a melt-down. Put it on ICE!!!

<http://ice.disa.mil>

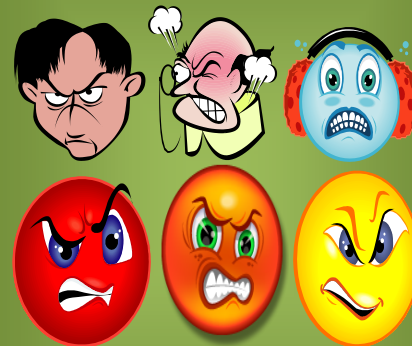
Are our customers "Happy" Customers?



Across Fort Hood, the Garrison and agencies external to the Garrison provide many services to customers who do not necessarily have the option to go somewhere else. Does this mean our commitment to them is any less important? NO! They are just as important as any other customer outside the boundaries of Fort Hood and we need to treat them as such. Our customers (in most cases our Soldiers and their Family members) are the reason we exist and we need to show them our appreciation for their commitment to this great institution we call the United States Army. Let's not forget the personal sacrifices they make each and every day so that Fort Hood can exist as the primary hub of an excellent customer service experience.

Remember the "Golden Rule" and give our customers the respect and attention they so deserve!

*Don't allow yourself to become one of these guys.*



*Tell us all about it by submitting your feedback on the ICE System.*

# ICE

*Interactive Customer Evaluation*



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